

Eastern Sierra Nevada & Northern Mojave Desert

Recreation Information Update

March 2 – March 8, 2011

Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Junction of US HWY 395 & SR 136
Lone Pine, California 93545

(760) 876-6222
TDD 876-6228

Open Daily: 8:00am to 5:00pm

ROADS: Major Eastern Sierra roads are open, including HWY 395. Trans Sierra roads – SR 120 (Tioga Pass), SR 108 (Sonora Pass) and SR 4 (Ebbets Pass) are closed for the winter. SR 89 (Monitor Pass) is closed for the winter. South SR 158 is open to June Lake Village. Mono Mills road (SR 120) and June Lake Loop (SR 158) are closed for the winter. Weather and road conditions can change rapidly this time of year; mountain passes are subject to immediate controls and/or closures. Drivers headed to the mountains need to be sure their vehicles are equipped with chains, including those with snowtires. For California highway conditions and construction schedules, call 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623), or visit the web at www.dot.ca.gov. For Nevada roads, call 1-877-NVROADS (1-877-687-6237), or visit the website at www.nevadadot.com/traveler/roads.

SR 270, the **BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK** road is closed for the winter. The Rock Creek road is open to the SnoPark at East Fork. In Bishop Creek, SR 168 is open to Aspendell and the South Lake road is open to Bishop Creek Lodge.

Major highways through **DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK** are open. The Big Pine, Salt Creek, Devils Golf Course and West Side dirt roads are open. Titus Canyon is open; icy – 4x4 vehicles are recommended. The Charcoal Kilns road is open; icy – use caution. The North Pass road into Saline Valley is open with snow, ice and mud; 4x4 recommended (carry chains). The South Pass road into Saline Valley is posted closed by Inyo County due to snow and ice. Rangers ask visitors traveling to remote desert valleys to leave a complete itinerary at home, obtain a good backcountry road map and be prepared for the unexpected. Drivers need to be sure their vehicle is in good condition and to carry an additional spare tire, extra gas, food and water. Check the website at www.nps.gov/deva for conditions and descriptions of roads ("Plan Your Visit & Things To Do" section).

WEATHER: Unsettled weather will persist over the Eastern Sierra and Northern Mojave mid week as a storm system moves over the region producing showers and gusty winds over the Sierra Crest. High pressure will begin to build Thursday, over California and Nevada resulting in clear skies and warming temperatures through Saturday. Another system is forecast for late Saturday, continuing through Monday. The storm is expected to generate mountain snow showers. Over desert areas, the storms will produce cloudy skies, gusty winds and a chance of scattered rain showers in the valleys. Fair weather is forecast to return on Tuesday. Highs have been in the 20s in the mountains, lower 60s in the Owens Valley and mid 70s in Death Valley, with the lows ranging from teens in the mountains, to the upper 40s in Death Valley.

CAMPGROUNDS: **INYO COUNTY** campgrounds are open. Additional privately operated campgrounds & RV facilities are open throughout the area.

The Bishop Field office of the **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT** campgrounds at Tuttle Creek (fee/no water) and the Pleasant Valley Pit (fee/no water) are open. During the summer of 2011, local BLM campgrounds are scheduled for renovation which may necessitate some closures. The schedule for closures has not yet been determined.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST, Lone Pine to Lee Vining most campgrounds are closed for the winter. The following sites are open: Lone Pine (no water/no fee), Bitterbrush (no water/no fee) and Holiday in Rock Creek (no water/no fee). Lower Grays Meadow on Independence Creek is open for the early fishing season (no water/reduced fee).

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK – Yosemite Valley has sites open and reservable. Reservations are accepted five months in advance on the 15th of each month, for a one-month block through recreation.gov; or call 1-877-444-6777. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis at Wawona (SR 41), Hodgdon Meadows (SR 120 near Big Oak Flat) and Camp Four walk-in campground in Yosemite Valley. For Yosemite National Park information, visit the web site at www.nps.gov/yose.

In **DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK**, open campgrounds include: Furnace Creek, Sunset, Texas Spring, Stovepipe Wells, Mesquite Springs, Emigrant (tent only/free) and Wildrose (free). RV hook-ups are available at Furnace Creek Ranch, Stovepipe Wells Village and Panamint Springs Resort. For more information, visit the park web site at www.nps.gov/deva.

RED ROCK CANYON STATE PARK, on SR 14 south of Ridgecrest, offers great desert camping.

Cooperating Agencies of the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Inyo County

California - Department of Fish & Game

City of Los Angeles - Department of Water & Power

California - Department of Transportation

National Park Service

Bureau of Land Management

Mono County

USDA - Forest Service

FISHING: The **OWENS RIVER** south of Crowley Lake (including Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Tinnemaha Reservoir) and **DIAZ LAKE** are open to year-round fishing. Southwest Inyo County (Independence Creek south to the county line, with US 395 on the east and the Sierra Crest to the west) will open on Saturday, 3/5 for fishing. The 2011 Eastern Sierra Fishing Guide is available at sporting good stores throughout the region, or at the Visitor Center. California fishing regulations are available at sporting good stores selling fishing licenses, the Visitor Center or on the web at www.dfg.ca.gov.

WINTER SPORTS: **MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN** is open with a 12 to 18 foot base. For daily lift operation and snow conditions, visit the web site at www.mammothmountain.com or call 1-888-766-9778. Join a **NATURALIST** for a new look at the Mountain. Tours are provided on Friday, Saturday & Sunday at 10:30am; meet at the bottom of Chair 2 (Stump Alley Express).

JUNE MOUNTAIN is open with a 7 to 11 foot base, check the web at www.junemountain.com or call 1-760-934-2224 for more information. Join a **NATURALIST** for a new perspective of June Mountain. Tours at June are presented at 10:30am and 1:00pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday; meet at the bottom of Chair J2.

Many snow-covered roads in Mono County offer a variety of scenery and terrain for X-COUNTRY SKIING, SNOWSHOEING and SNOWMOBILING. **TAMARACK CROSS COUNTRY SKI CENTER** in the Mammoth Lakes Basin is open with 19 miles of set track; call 1-760-934-2442 for more information. Join a **NATURALIST** for a free Nordic ski tour from the Ski Center on Friday and Saturday at 11:00am, or a snowshoe tour at 11:00am Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The **SNOPARK IN ROCK CREEK** at East Fork is open for the winter.

Visit the **MAMMOTH LAKES WELCOME CENTER** for current snow conditions, trail maps and avalanche risk; open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm or call 1-760-924-5500. The **EASTERN SIERRA AVALANCHE CENTER (ESAC)** offers avalanche advisories and an on-line discussion center for the region. For information, check the web site at www.esavalanche.org.

BACKCOUNTRY: Backpackers should be prepared with winter gear for snowy/icy terrain, cold temperatures and sudden weather changes. **WILDERNESS PERMITS** are required for overnight travel all year long. Trailhead quotas, which daily limit the number of hikers on trails, are no longer in effect for Eastern Sierra wilderness areas. Self-issue permits can be obtained in the night boxes at the following locations: InterAgency Visitor Center (Lone Pine), Bishop Ranger Station, Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center, Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center (Lee Vining) and Bridgeport Ranger Station after office hours. Reservations for wilderness permits can be made up to six months in advance of the starting date of a trip, by phone at 1-760-873-2483, fax to 1-760-873-2484, or by mail - 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514. The Whitney zone permit lottery for 2011 is accepting applications through March 15th (fax applications will not be accepted). Day use in the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek is included in the Whitney Zone quota; apply in the lottery. For more information on wilderness permits, including an application form and fees, visit the Inyo National Forest web site at www.fs.usda.gov/inyo.

THIS WEEK'S FUN: LONE PINE/SOUTHERN INYO COUNTY EARLY TROUT SEASON OPENER & DIAZ LAKE TROUT DERBY - On Saturday - 3/5 - TROUT DERBY will start at 6:30am and continue to the 3:00pm weigh-in at Diaz Lake, with lots of prizes for all age groups. Call the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce for information, at 1-760-876-4444.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK is open daily 10:00am to 3:00pm. Visitors must use over-snow transportation to access the park. Bring drinking water, food and plenty of warm clothes for a winter visit to Bodie.

EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM in Independence is open from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily, with exhibits on Inyo County; including a significant collection of Native American baskets and artifacts from Manzanar NHS.

The Interpretive Center at **MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**, located 5 miles south of Independence, is open daily from 9:00am to 4:30pm. Self-guided walking and auto tours make it easy to explore the park. Check at the Interpretive Center or the web at www.nps.gov/manz for more information.

Visit the Beverly & Jim Rogers **MUSEUM OF LONE PINE FILM HISTORY**; with exhibits celebrating the heroes, the films and the locations of the many movies shot in the area. The museum opens daily at 10:00am; closing at 6:00pm Monday through Wednesday, at 7:00pm Thursday through Saturday and at 4:00pm on Sunday.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER (temporary) at the Furnace Creek Ranch is open daily from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Ranger talks and other interpretive programs are presented daily. An evening program is presented at 7:00pm in a variety of locations near Furnace Creek (check at the Visitor Center). **SCOTTY'S CASTLE** has "Living History" tours from 9:00am to 5:00pm, and "Underground Mystery Tours" daily. Check the website at www.nps.gov/deva for more information. Lower Vine Ranch walking tours are presented on Wednesday and Saturday; reservations recommended; call 1-760-786-2392.

Death Valley park rangers will be hosting a Star Party on Saturday, 3/5 at 7:00pm at the Harmony Borax Works (one mile north of Furnace Creek). Telescopes will be provided. A special Dark Sky program will be presented - learn how the dark night skies of Death Valley are becoming a vanishing resource over most of modern day America.

Reports on current recreation conditions, schedules of planned events and detailed information on visitor destinations throughout the Eastern Sierra Nevada and Northern Mojave Desert are available daily at the Visitor Center. 3/2/11kcw